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ACADEMICIAN ALEKSANDR ALEKSANDROVICH SKOCHINSKIY

The Department of Technical Sciences of the Academy of Sciences USSR, together with the Mining Institute, of the Academy of Sciences USSR, the Moscow Mining Institute imeni I. V. Stalin, and the All-Union Scientific Technical Mining Society, met recently in the conference hall of the Department of Technical Sciences to celebrate the 75th birthday of Academician Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Skochinskiy.

Among the delegates attending the meeting were representatives of the mining industry, co-workers and students of Skochinskiy, and members of scientific institutes and higher educational institutions of Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Khar'kov, Makeyevka, and Novosibirsk.

Skochinskiy received many congratulatory messages, including those from Academician S. I. Vavilov, President, Academy of Sciences; the Presidium, Academy of Sciences; the Department of Technical Sciences, Academy of Sciences; the Ministry of Coal Industries; the Ministry of Higher Education; the Ministry of Metallurgical Industries; GosPlan SSSR; the Academy of Sciences Ukrainian SSR; the Academy of Sciences Kazakh SSR; the West Siberian Affiliate, Academy of Sciences; and various other organizations.

Academician A. M. Terpigorev's opening address described Skochinskiy's 50 years of scientific and organizational activity. Terpigorev stated that Skochinskiy became famous in 1904 when he published his famous work, Mine Air and the Fundamentals of Its Circulation in Mines. This book represented the foundations of modern mine aerology.

However, Skochinskiy's greatest contributions were not made until after the October Revolution. The sinking of new mines demanded much research in the field of mine aerology. Data obtained as a result of this research was an absolute necessity in order for engineers planning the sinking of new mines to keep in mind the problem of maintaining the miners' health. One of the factors initiated as a result of Skochinskiy's work was the construction of mine tunnels and shafts wide enough to permit optimum circulation of air. During the period 1925 to 1926, Skochinskiy, along with several of his students, conducted on-the-spot studies of Donets and Kuznets mines to determine the natural resistance in mines to circulation of air. After many years of studies and investigations in this field, Skochinskiy published his monograph Mine Ventilation.

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In designing new mines, it is most important that every consideration be taken to determine the potential and most desirable air circulation in order to assure satisfactory dissipation of harmful mine gases. This new field of research was founded and developed by Skochinskiy. It is safe to say that in no other country was this field of research developed as comprehensively as in the Soviet Union. The ultimate result of these studies was the establishment of the theory of aerodynamic structure of the ventilation current and its operation in mines.

Another of Skochinskiy's scientific activities dealt with the study of the gas regime in mines and prevention of gas and dust explosions. Research in this field led to the conclusion that it was imperative to determine the methane content of the rocks in mines. Since 1937, the Mining Institute, Academy of Sciences USSR, under the supervision of Skochinskiy, carried out local studies to determine the methane gas content of coal strata in Donbass, Karaganda, and Kuzbass mines. These studies permitted the definition of zones of gas-bearing rocks and thus indicated the possible gas danger in new mines which were sunk in these coal basins.

In the general field of research on the gas regime in mines, Skochinskiy also studied the properties of methane gas and coal dust. Long years of research in this field permitted Skochinskiy to make some important and valuable recommendations regarding the prediction and localization of mine explosions. The measures suggested by Skochinskiy were later incorporated into the Soviet Mine Safety Regulations.

Skochinskiy also suggested new means for quenching mine fires, and their prevention through the use of antipyrrogenous materials -- chemical inhibitors. Under his leadership, studies were started at the Mining Institute, Academy of Sciences USSR, to determine the value of foam for extinguishing mine fires.

One of the most difficult problems in the field of mining is the control and proper utilization of rock pressure. Skochinskiy has been expanding this field of studies in the Soviet Union for the past 15 years. In general, it can be said that all developments in the field of mine technology either had their inception in theories developed by Skochinskiy, or in their final form were evaluated by Skochinskiy.

During World War II, research conducted by Skochinskiy in the field of mining aided substantially in expanding the USSR mining industry. From 1941 to 1943, he was chairman of the Commission for the Mobilization of Resources of the Urals, Western Siberia, and Kazakhstan for Defense, Academy of Sciences USSR. Today Skochinskiy is personally undertaking the study of new resources for mineral deposits and their most efficient utilization by industry.

Skochinskiy has been awarded four Orders of Lenin, two Orders of Labor Red Banner, and several medals of the Soviet Union.

Academician A. M. Terpigorev was followed by Doctor of Technical Sciences V. V. Komarov, who described Skochinskiy's role in the organization and furtherance of a Soviet school of mine aerology.

In his reply, Academician Skochinskiy recalled that 5 years ago, in this same place, he had presented his own so-called 10-year plan of scientific work. He was proud to reveal that part of his plan had already been completed. At present, there remains the project of solving some of the state-posed questions regarding full exploitation of large mineral strata in the Kuzbass region; his one ambition will be to complete this work. He stated that success is certain in view of the fact that he is receiving excellent aid from Academician Aleksandr Mitrofanovich Terpigorev and Academician Lev Dmitriyevich Shevyakov.

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